

THE ARKHAM COLLECTOR



Number Eight :: Winter, 1971 :: .50c the copy



Copyright 1970, by August Derleth

DENIS TIANI. Young artists from time to time send along specimen works to Arkham House. The most recent to do so is Denis Tiani of Michigan, whose work suggests that he has a career in art to develop. He acknowledges the influence of Harry Clarke and Lee Brown Coye. The above drawing is the least complex of those from his pen that we have seen.



RISING COSTS. Though announced at \$7.50 the copy in our new stocklist, Clark Ashton Smith's *Selected Poems*, slated for publication next summer, will retail at \$10.00. A big book of 450 pages, rising costs have indicated that it would be economically unwise to offer this big collection at less than \$10.00 the copy.



COMING BOOKS. In addition to Clark Ashton Smith's omnibus, *Selected Poems*, Arkham House hopes to publish soon the new anthology of hitherto unpublished tales, *Dark Things*, edited by August Derleth, with contributions by Joseph Payne Brennan, H. P. Lovecraft, Basil Copper, Ramsey Campbell, Donald Wandrei, Harlan Ellison, John Metcalfe, Emil Petaja, H. Russell Wakefield, James Wade, Brian Lumley, Carl Jacobi, David Drake, Margery Lawrence — and some comparative newcomers to the field: P. H. Booth, Donald J. Walsh Jr., Frances May, and Charles Partington — a big book in every sense of the word, announced in our new stocklist at \$6.50 the copy.

We are publishing in December a collection of a dozen stories by the British author, Denys Val Baker, under the title of *THE FACE IN THE MIRROR*, at \$3.75. The stories are: *The Face in the Mirror* / *The Inheritance* / *The Anniversary* / *Voice from the Past* / *Passenger to Liverpool* / *The Trees* / *A Woman of Talent* / *The Cruise of the Morwenna* / *A Tall Tale* / *The Old Man of the Towans* / *The Tune* / *The Last Laugh*.

TO HIS MISTRESS, DEAD AND DARKLY RETURN'D

I love thee now; thy beauties move me yet —
 Thy marble limbs, thy small and slender feet;
 Thy face so pale and delicately sad,
 With eyes whose lust might make a poet mad,
 And lips like blood-drops, teeth with piercing gleam;
 Thy slim, white hands, far stronger than they seem;
 Thy low, soft voice, with accent strange and sweet —
 Perchance I loved thee ere we ever met.
 My love for thee near rends me like some knife!
 Yet thou lov'st me, as I on thee do dote —
 Thou show'st it by thy warm and hungry kiss,
 Thy strong and cruel embrace — and more than this,
 Two small, red scars which now adorn my throat,
 Wherefrom thou hast my blood, my love, my life.

— Roger Johnson

† † †

THE COCOMACAQUE

By Carl Jacobi

“There is no door open to the transgressor save the door to beyond.”

Death of a Regiment
B. W. Sykes

They drove into Victoria at three in the afternoon. Right away Billings sensed he had a setup. The Farmers & Merchants Bank occupied a red brick building on the last intersection of the town's main street. Across from it was the lumber yard, empty at this hour, and farther down, the abandoned creamery. The bank had an alarm bell over the

front entrance but the connecting cables weren't even concealed.

Down the street were a barber shop, two taverns, a hardware and a lunch counter, and at the far end the general Store — the sign read: "Supermarket". That was all. Billings parked the car and turned to the girl at his side.

"Back in five minutes," he said.

He walked to the bank, climbed the steps and pushed through the glass doors. The place smelled of ink and old paper. A man of fifty sat at a desk behind the half wall, visible through the grillwork. A woman in a blue dress stood at the counter. The only patron, a farmer, went out as Billings came in.

At the far wall the vault door stood open and with his 20-20 vision Billings saw what it was at a glance. It was a Simpson, Model XXV, double-tumbler, 14 or 15 pinion key, semi-time lock. Circa 1950. A trained ear should make opening it not too great a problem. But he still hadn't decided on a day or night operation.

"I'd like to see the manager," he said to the woman at the counter.

She nodded and turned. "Mr. Davis."

The man at the desk got up and came forward.

"My name is Parker," Billings said. "Clement Parker. I just bought a year-around cottage over on Lake Waconia. I'd like to see about getting insurance."

The man nodded and said what Billings expected him to say. "Our Miss Evans handles all our insurance matters. She just stepped out. Could you come back in half an hour?"

Over the banker's shoulder Billings took another appraising look at the Simpson. He directed a swift glance at the rear door which was sealed with steel bars. The only other modern preventative visible was an electric eye near the center of the enclosed area, low down on the baseboard.

A half hour would be fine, he told the banker, and went out with all the information he needed.

He walked back down the street to the parked car and nodded to the girl waiting for him. She got out and together they crossed the street and entered the larger of the two taverns. Inside were cool semidarkness with a yeasty smell and a half dozen men in work clothes lined up at the bar. Billings and the girl chose a booth midway down the aisle where they could watch the street through the glare of autumn sunlight on the plate-glass windows.

"How's it look?" the girl asked. She was an ash blonde with large, dark arachnid-like eyes.

He smiled. "Like candy from a baby. Are you sure, Spider, you don't want to wait till it's done and let me pick you up later?"

The girl he called Spider shook her head. "No," she said. "I want to be with you."

Billings lit a cigarette and tried to relax. In spite of the fact that things had been going well for him in recent weeks — that last job in Pine City had been a pushover — he was on edge. For one thing, there was something . . . well, sad about this place. Maybe it was just the way the building shadows fell across the sidewalks, with alternate patches of light where a structure had been torn down or none had ever been built. Victoria was an old town.

As he sat there he found himself looking at a man walking down the opposite side of the street — a big man with a thatch of copper-colored hair, streaked with grey. He was smoking a cigar and emitting great puffs of smoke at each step. The glare of sunlight was directly in Billings' eyes, blurring the man's features, but what was odd about him was the club he carried. The thing had a huge head and was fastened to his wrist by a leather thong.

"Who's the cave man?" Billings asked the tavern-waiter who had come to their booth.

"Cave man?" The waiter looked puzzled.

"The guy across the street with the club."

Something like a tremor passed through the tavern-man. "Are you sure you saw him?"

Billings glanced back out the window. "He's gone now," he said. "But he carried the biggest shillelagh I've ever seen. Who is he, the local police force?"

"He was." The waiter turned away, an odd glint in his eyes. Presently he came back, polishing a glass. "As it happens," he said, "That's not an ordinary club. It's a *cocomacaque*. And you really didn't see him."

"A coco — what?"

"A kind of war club they used in Haiti before the French invasion. The guy carrying it was old Charlie Yarboro. He used to be village marshall."

"What do you mean, I really didn't see him?"

"Well the way Doc explains it — that's Doc Marple, our local G. P. — you don't really see nothin' but a personality-residue brought into your mind by what you were told to expect.

"That's hogwash," Billings said. "I saw him. And nobody told me anything until I came in here."

"Well, all of us don't agree with Doc," the tavern man admitted. "But it must be something like that, seeing as how Old Charlie's been dead and gone these five years. Malaria did him in; picked it up in the Haiti lowlands where he lived several years. Also got into a scrap with a filling-station bandit and that didn't help any."

"You mean someone robbed the filling-station?" Billings kept his face blank.

Tried to. Old Charlie surprised 'em and waded in with that *cocomacaque* he allus carried. Old Charlie claimed that club had mystic powers and I really think he believed it. Some queer dottle about the club being made from a growth that shaded a *mamaloï's* grave on the 'black island'."

Billings paid the man, left the booth and led the way outside. Things were looking up. A bank just waiting to be taken, in spite of the fact that a filling-station had been unsuccessfully hit a few years before. And a town with a ghost-legend that spoke eloquently for the courage of its citizens in the event of an emergency.

But there wasn't going to be any emergency — at least not until Billings was far removed from the scene, for he had now definitely decided on a night operation. Heisting a money-factory in the open may be quick and simple but it's just as likely to go wrong.

"I forgot cigarettes, he said to the girl. "Meet you at the car."

Walking across the street, he saw again ahead of him that big man with the copper colored hair and the club but when the man seemed to pause in the darker shade of an overhead store awning and Billings came up to that spot, he was no longer there.

If it was to be a night operation he would need tools, he told himself, and he knew where to get them. He headed the car down the Chanhassen road toward 169 and Minneapolis. Several times before they reached Chanhassen the '67 Buick faltered — it seemed to be the distributor — and Billings thought he'd better pick up a newer model before he came back. Besides, there was always the chance of this one being recognized.

"I'll leave you at a motel," he said to the girl at his side.

"No," she said again. "I want to be with you."

They came by the Oak Ridge Cemetery and, as he always did when he passed a graveyard, he idly fell to noticing the tombstones that stood close to the road. Billings had an odd interest in names; it seemed to him that men with high-sounding handles were the most successful. Of course, he told himself, the owners of the names on the

stones could hardly be called successful. Not any more, they couldn't. He read the markers: Alonzo Palquin, Frank Jessleton, Charles Yarboro . . .

Charles Yarboro! The grave was separated a little from the others, the grass had grown to weeds around it, and the stone was tilted. Billings had but a fleeting glimpse as the car sped by but he saw that he was wrong in his first observation that the plot was uncared for. A red-headed man was down on his hands and knees, working at the grass.

Billings spent six hours in Minneapolis where, among other things, he picked up tools and another car. He headed back for Victoria. The main street was a melancholy lane of light and shadow as he and Spider re-entered the town from the east; only three widely-spaced arc lights gave illumination. He drove to the last intersection, turned into it, made a U-turn and parked on the side opposite from the bank buildings, about fifty yards from the entrance in the shadow of an elm. He turned off the motor and sat in silence for several minutes, looking out the windshield. Then he turned to the girl. "Get out of the car and stand in the street next to it. If anyone comes tell them we had car trouble and I've gone to look up a garage man. Then tap the horn twice. If you do I won't come back here. I'll meet you at the highway. Don't panic. Just take it easy."

Spider bit her lip nervously. She was taut with fear. "How about the . . . marshall . . . the man with the club?"

He stared. "You mean the guy the fellow in the tavern called Charlie Yarboro?"

"Yes."

"For Pete's sake!" he said. "You heard the man. He's been dead five years."

"But you saw him. And I did, too. At least . . . I think I did."

"Think you did!" His voice was harsh. "When?"

"When we passed the cemetery. He was kneeling by his grave."

For an instant the contagion of the girl's fear sent an icy worm crawling up Billings's spine. Then he laughed unpleasantly.

"Don't go spiritualist on me. Just get out of the car and do as you're told."

He took up his bag of tools, crossed the street and walked slowly past the bank entrance until he reached the end of the building. He stopped there a moment, then turned into a narrow alleyway. The alley was L-shaped and led directly to the rear of the bank. Here two building lights, high up on the wall, shone on the rear door.

From his bag Billings took a small air pistol and inserted two pellets in the magazine. He took quick aim and fired twice. There were two soft implosions and the alleyway was plunged in darkness. He smiled in satisfaction. But then, in that moment before his eyes accustomed to the change of light, he threw himself to the ground and jerked out his Webley revolver. He thought he had seen a man crouching in the shadow of a refuse barrel. A man with a big something in his hand. He shook his head as the shadow resolved itself into a crumpled paper box. Nerves! He mustn't let them get the best of him at this stage. He exchanged the air pistol for an unframed soloid saw blade, strode to the door and fell to work.

It was tougher than he'd thought. First he had to locate the conduits and deactivate the alarm. Then he had to drill admission holes within cutting range of the bars holding the door. But the bars must have been a new alloy with glass insertions which played hob with the saw teeth. The better part of an hour elapsed before Billings stood in the bank interior. Here there was no sound save the hum of the electric clock on the near wall.

Billings advanced to the vault door and took two ob-

jects from his bag. One, a headphone, he clamped to his ear; the other, a magnetic sensor, he thrust against the panel just below the combination dial; he began to turn the dial very slowly.

From far off sounded the bull-throated Diesel horn as the night-freight approached the Victoria station. Twice as he worked he glanced over his shoulder. Somehow he had the inner feeling of being secretly watched. The room was lit with melancholy dimness by a night light and as he looked he fancied he saw a *cocomacaque*, or whatever they called such a club, depending from the ceiling without apparent support.

From Haiti, the tavern man had said. Billings had never been to Haiti and probably wouldn't have believed the voodoo tales told about the island if he had. But he did remember one story he had heard from a grizzled old codger in the Louisiana swamps where Billings had spent his rat-like younger years. The oldster claimed to have fled from Haiti after killing the Indies-famous *mamaloï*, Rosa Nagusta, while she was in the midst of her black ritual. "I was stone drunk," the old man said, "and I shot her just for the hell of it." That was in 1943 and her zombie-spirit had been searching for him ever since. In his shack in the swamp the old man with a macabre pride had showed Billings a newspaper clipping — dateline: Port-au-Prince 1944 — But in the spring of '45 the old man had disappeared, utterly and completely.

Billings swore at his random thought and brought his mind back to the task at hand.

"Twelve . . eighteen . . stroke at four . . eleven . . nine . . stroke at three . . ." he turned the dial. But he lost the tumblers. He moved the sensor slightly and tried again. Again he failed. A thin bead of perspiration began to ooze out onto his forehead. Eleven . . nine . . stroke at . . stroke at . . .

The freight's klaxon sounded close by now as the train came into the station.

It was no go. Much as he disliked, he would have to "soup" it.

He got the nitro out of the bag and his hands trembled a little as he prepared it. When he had finished he retreated to the far end of the enclosed area and crouched behind a desk. The sound would wake the whole town of course. He wondered how long it would be before Marshall Charlie Yarboro reached the bank.

There he went again. Not Yarboro . . . !

The explosion came. A hollow thumping roar vibrated the windows, shook the floor and the furniture. Through the smoke and dust he saw the vault door yawning partially open.

He ran forward into the narrow chamber and began scooping up bundles of bills, throwing them into his tool bag. He was working against time now and he hoped Spider, hearing the explosion, was back inside the car with the motor running for a fast getaway.

He filled the tool bag, began cramming currency in an empty canvas sack he found on the vault floor. Far away a voice, pitched in authority, shouted something. A distant alarm bell sounded.

He hadn't figured it would be this close. He seized a last bundle of twenties and stuffed it in the bulging sack. Then he swung the sack toward the door, gained the alleyway and sprinted for the sidewalk.

As he emerged from the shadows he saw the girl, Spider, standing motionless in the street.

"In the car!" he yelled. "In the car . . . !"

But it wasn't Spider. It was Charlie Yarboro . . . Old Charlie there by the car . . . silently holding the *cocomacaque* . . . It was Charlie . . . waiting for him . . .

Rage at the sardonic aplomb of the man washed over

Billings. He jerked up his Webley and fired twice in quick succession, but the slugs, impossible as it seemed, missed their mark. All in one motion he hurled the two bags in the car's open window and grappled with the red-haired figure, bearing him to earth. The ease of the action surprised him and for an instant he fancied he was fighting a shadow. Then the *cocomacaque* caught him an evil blow on the shoulder. In a fury he wrenched the club free and brought the heavy butt-end down upon the other's head. Again and again he struck until the prostrate form lay motionless beneath him.

† † †

Cruising down Blacktop 3 without destination, the Carver County Deputy Sheriff sighted a black sedan traveling toward the highway at excessive speed. The Deputy turned about, gave chase and after a mile flagged the car down. He checked the driver's license, the unlocked trunk and was about to end the matter with a routine ticket when something prompted him to look beneath the out-of-place rear seat. A moment later he was staring at bundles of currency. Billings realized the game was up and gave in without a struggle. He was taken to Chaska, the county seat and lodged in the courthouse jail and the forces of law were swiftly marshalled against him.

"I don't understand it," the Deputy said. "We didn't find the weapon he used but it must have been something big and heavy. My guess is that Billings went momentarily crazy at the sight of all that easy money. Why else would he turn on his lookout girl friend and club her to death?"

† † †

TO HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT

Lover of hills and fields and towns antique,
How hast thou wandered hence
On ways not found before,

Beyond the dawnward spires of Providence?
 Hast thou gone forth to seek
 Some older bourn than these —
 Some Arkham of the prime and central wizardries?
 Or, with familiar felidae,
 Dost now some new and secret wood explore,
 A little past the senses' farther wall —
 Where spring and sunset charm the eternal path
 From Earth to ether in dimensions nemoral?
 Or has the Silver Key
 Opened perchance for thee
 Wonders and dreams and worlds ulterior?
 Hast thou gone home to Ulthar or to Pnath?
 Has the high king who reigns on dim Kadath
 Called back his courtly, sage ambassador?
 Or darkling Cthulhu sent
 The sign which makes thee now a councilor
 Within that foundered fortress of the deep
 Where the Old Ones stir in sleep
 Till mighty temblors shake their slumbering continent?

Lo! in this little interim of days
 How far thy feet are sped
 Upon the fabulous and mooted ways
 Where walk the mythic dead!
 For us the grief, for us the mystery . . .
 And yet thou art not gone
 Nor given wholly unto dream and dust:
 For, even upon
 This lonely western hill of Averoigne
 Thy flesh had never visited,
 I meet some wise and sentient wraith of thee,
 Some undeparting presence, gracious and august.
 More luminous for thee the vernal grass,
 More magically dark the Druid stone,

And in the mind thou art forever shown
 As in a magic glass;
 And from the spirit's page thy runes can never pass.
 — Clark Ashton Smith

† † †
 BLACK THIRST

The yellowed pages, rotten with decay,
 Crawling with loathsome symbols, fill my brain
 With wild, tumultuous visions. Were I sane
 I'd rise and hurl the leprous book away
 Yet I read on, half thrilled, half in disgust,
 Rapt with sick fascination to explore
 The vile corruption of forbidden lore,
 That leaves me weak and soiled with nameless lust.

I rise with dawn and scrub my shaking hands
 And gulp strong brandy down, and try to pray,
 And vow to burn these books — some other day . . .
 But I am like one trapped in sinking sands,
 Who strayed apart far from the paths of men.
 The night will come, and I will read again.

— Lin Carter

† † †

ENOUGH

Enough, tonight when she returns I will
 Speak to her of the wrong she does my name;
 While I lie here incapable and ill,
 She's out pursuing her licentious game.
 With friend or foe I know not but I fear,
 That while my illness lingers, day by day,
 I lose her more, the one I hold most dear!
 That with her lover she might fly away!

Or is it all illusion — all a lie —
 The errands which she runs, are they for me?
 That devil jealousy, to think that I
 Distrust her clean and pure fidelity.
 The creaking stair, the door, at last my wife
 Returns to me — but why that wicked knife?
 — Brian Lumley

† † †

YOHK THE NECROMANCER

by Gary Myers

VERILY WAS it known to the good cotters of Vornai that Yohk the fat-bellied clerk in the Street of Frogs was a sorcerer of no little accomplishment; and when it happened that many of their number disappeared mysteriously and under curious circumstance, these same cotters were scandalously quick to lay blame at his dubious threshold.

This Yohk had entered the city, by way of the Gate of Mists, in the grey dawn of that morning three madmen came down from the hill there is outside Vornai, shrieking disquieting things of shadows and the World's ending. The day is one of especial note to the purple-robed chroniclers of the city — though whether because of Yohk's coming or the madmen's is uncertain — who still relate how the terrible lore of that old man of whom no one likes to speak was muttered because someone remarked upon a startling resemblance between those madmen and the unfortunate three who had last ventured to dine at the old man's sinister House, and how Yohk listened avidly to those tales and smiled. They tell too how it was he who spoke so zealously for the destruction of that great House some name *Worm* for no sensible reason, and particularly the breaking of those five shocking pillars that guard it. Assuredly his rash plan was never realized. The people did not like his soft

flabby face and tiny eyes, and feared too the ire of strange gods.

And shortly thereafter Yohk rented the abandoned temple of a lesser god in the Street of Frogs to dwell in, taking the clerk's trade for his own, but practising frightful thaumaturgies at his leisure, as old wives will attest. Where the madmen chose to live is nowhere recorded.

Now it was soon obvious to the indignant citizens that Yohk did not intend to behave at all properly in those accepted patterns custom dictates. Spurning the city's rightful gods, he worshipped openly a bloated obscenity carved from queer black jade and squatted on a smoky crystal wherein fitful shadows danced — it looked surprisingly like a squid with ears. But when the priests of Kaman Thah and Nasht of the Flame came to admonish him against this wicked idolatry, Yohk only made a curious gesture with his left hand and laughed horribly. He had taken something of the priests' that he kept imprisoned in a little ebon box and subjected to inexplicable tortures. The priests were quick to leave. And his disgusting refusal to eat as other men gave rise to much speculation about his obesity and whether he was entirely mortal; such speculation the clerk always found entertaining. Of his late visitors too was some dim rumour woven, but if the precise nature of these callers that came only with the moon had been revealed it is doubtful whether the gossipers had dared utter another word.

So when a seller of myrrh vanished unexpectedly one evening exactly two weeks before Walpurgis Night, it was only natural that Yohk should be blamed, and no one was surprised.

In years that are even one with the dust Yohk had spoken with the cryptic yellow-robed One whose silken veil bulges damnably, and heard the voiceless oracle of Bokrug hinting strangely of Sarnath's dreadful doom. He

studied long with pale hands trembling in the mildewed scrolls of black magic and lunacy, bartered from the meeping hound-faced ghouls who snatched them from the shadow-guarded crypts of Leng. In spirit he gazed on the Vale of Pnath, and journeyed to the grim wall of Kadath in the Cold Waste where no man treadeth waking. He mouthed the detestable runes graven there on blocks of crumbling onyx, and the unspeakable name of Azathoth, and in age-old corridors of centuried madness he searched frantically, until the ravening Guardians sent him fleeing. At night beneath the wan moon's leprous face he sloughed away the dust mercifully hiding that which waits in certain unhallowed graves.

And in his forbidden delvings he found again the spell that was lost with primal Ib, whereby men are transformed into spiders with maimed and broken legs; and how to invoke the dead, which is perilous, and how clothe in substance the spirits of them that never lived, which is infinitely worse. He knew the signs that give power over the storms and supremacy over Hell's black legions. He learned how one might traverse those whimpering zones that lie beyond the nethermost dark stars. The seven thousand appellations of daemons he consulted, and the five hundred and fifty and five chants of the Dholes, and the writings of Dzyan and Klek — but the Word of unbinding, the key that opens no door save one he could not find; the spell that if anything in the World must free the Great Old Ones. For Yohk well knew of those Old Gods of madness who lay entombed and dead in dark places of the World, and knew too that they would not always stay dead. And he worshipped Them and laboured at Their bidding and sought ever that one Word, knowing that they would be free to reward Their chosen with the dark jewels of incredible wealth and power beyond the laughable dreams of men, as is taught among those who expect to receive them

and therefore must be true. But he was certain now that the spell he sought was nowhere in the World, and so he must search behind it. He would open a way that *something* might pass through, something that was possessed of strange knowledge and would tell, for a price.

And at last, armed with his enchantment and all the proper accouterments, he had made his way by devious paths out of the city at evening, to the wooded hill that coters shun who know the tales of that old man of whom no one likes to speak, and know them to be true. It was not yet dark when he set out. But soon the stars crept out from behind the East and the shades of night fell like a curtain across the World. Red Betelgeuse peered down threateningly through the sinister clouds, but the fat clerk paid no heed; he trudged on through the grasping evil trees and brambles and thorns, up to that doubtful House where rats hold blasphemous revels and chuckling sapphire-eyed spiders weave their clammy webs in the dark, and where Yohk had good reason to know his shocking God lay sleeping. He went in by the back door. He picked his way very carefully over fragments of broken stone — grey stars that quite unsettled him — into a great pentagon-shapen hall silent with Time's unprinted dust, where once a drunken old man had spoken of dreadful things to his guests. And there he traced those three charmed concentric circles as is prescribed in such matters, and lighted the black candle fashioned of the fat of corpses, and spoke thrice the summons to those beings who wait for just such purposes somewhere outside the World. And nothing at all happened.

So Yohk the Necromancer swore wickedly and dropped his guards and stamped out of the House called Worm, forgetting that not all things that come when they are called are readily seen, a fact that cannot be forgotten with impunity. And that night something followed him home.

Now when that unfortunate seller of myrrh was followed during the next fortnight by no less than half a score of his neighbors, the cotters' distress and antipathy toward the sorcerer was incredible. Certainly Yohk was never seen, only a gathering of shadows that could not have been natural, a scream cut short with horrible suggestion, and then someone was missing who had not been a short time ago.

And then these regrettable happenings ceased altogether, but Yohk seemed to have vanished quite as completely as the others. No longer was he spied passing silently along the Way of Tombs as was his wont, nor peering evilly from his window. In secret temples men burned incense and thanked the inscrutable gods. Yet it was whispered among others that the clerk had only shut himself away from prying eyes to work some new blasphemy whose like had not been seen for many years more than a hundred, not since that infamous old man raised up from Hell the House of the Worm. Indeed, they said, already had a winged devil descended from the Moon to light upon his doorstep, though none seemed to remember that it flew away when no one answered its knock. Through the twisting cobbled streets an unrest grew and men cursed Yohk and plotted his destruction.

Soon Yohk's neighbours were complaining loudly of a frightful stench and the well-fed rats that had taken to wandering the Street of Frogs by night and leering at pedestrians. At last the guant mayor and his five augerers, abetted in his plan by those vacant-faced priests who had found Yohk's laughter disconcerting and hoped to regain their souls the sorcerer took, came armed with scrolls and holy periapts and chanting of the goddess N'see Kaambl whose splendour hath shattered worlds. They marched straight up the ill-spoken Street of Frogs from the Square of the Thirteen Pomegranates, singing of N'see Kaambl,

and the plump rats fled scurrying. Right to that dubious threshold of Yohk they came (where it was necessary to wait until his intricate black lock could be picked), and muttering each a zealous prayer to his particular god, they entered and shut the door behind them.

Not many minutes had passed before they rushed frantically out again to cringe in alleys and less likely places, and would not willingly tell what they had seen.

But they found only a room of tapestried hangings depicting odd slant-eyed faces and cryptic signs that clearly meant something unspeakable, and deep blue rugs sprinkled with myriad jewels arranged in constellations no eye looks on in any gulf. Somewhere a langourous incense burned, and four curious globes of light drifted serenely just below the high vaulted ceiling. On a table of peculiarly graven ebony was spread a crumbling scroll; a silver pen was dropt to the stone flags as though from the writer's forgetful hand; the writer sat slumped foreward across the table and very still. It was the unorthodox clerk Yohk, who had lost something of his fleshiness. So they left quickly, showing no proper respect for the dead, and shut up the temple with the clerk still seated there, for none would touch him when they saw the horror in his glazed eyes. They did not even take away the eleven peculiarly-marked bodies they found in the cellar.

† † †
K'N-YAN

It tells in mouldy books as old as man

How once SanSu the Dreamer found the glade

That hides the granite stairway no man made

And trod those crumbling steps down to K'n-yan

Whose endless labyrinths are filled with mist,

Blue-lit by noxious fungi, echoing hissed

And whispered words too faint to understand.

He sought to learn the meaning of that dread
 And sinister susurrus, as the pad
 And shuffle of his slippers marked his tread
 Through nether caverns elder gods forbade
 Until the whispers, fluttering louder, led
 To where SanSu, as mists whirled round his head,
 Could understand those voices of the dead.
 But when he knew just what those whispers said,
 SanSu went mad.

— Walter C. DeBill, Jr.

† † †

SUMMER NIGHT

This night is blistered;
 indescribable impulses
 burn the air of my room.
 A mugger's moon
 magnifies the cinder-block city.
 I am impelled to put on shoes
 and otherwise walk grey-naked
 down through the gritty streets.
 What difference would it make?
 A thousand unreconciled wraiths,
 watching their memories
 with withered regrets,
 would stride along beside me,
 stride through this dead city,
 grey phantoms all of us,
 awaiting the final red sun
 that will melt
 even the granite shafts
 in the last burnt cemetery
 crammed with its cargo of bones.

— Joseph Payne Brennan

LOVECRAFT ON LOVE. Though H. P. Lovecraft's ex-wife, Sonia Haft Greene Davis, destroyed his letters to her, a long portion of one escaped the flames. Written from his Angell Street address in Providence, ca. 1922, Lovecraft sets forth in it his concepts of love. Addressed "Dear Mrs. Greene" — their marriage was still some time away — he wrote:

"The mutual love of man and woman for one another is an imaginative experience that consists of having its object bear a certain special relation to the aesthetic-emotional life of its possessor, and depends upon the fulfillment of certain aesthetic conditions by the object.

"Love is generally linked with subsidiary conditions such as pride, admiration, eroticism, intellectual congeniality, etc., and in practice it may be taken for granted that all other things being equal, the possessor generally prefers to have the object close at hand, although a purely ethereal and imaginative force such as real love is sometimes independent of time, space or corporeal existence. True love thrives equally well in presence or in absence, proving that the force is an exalted and imaginative one, and directed toward the most permanent spiritual and aesthetically responsive part of the personality. It need not disavow a parallel erotic appreciation but it inwardly eclipses and transcends it.

"Such love primarily presupposes a profound and sincere mutual attachment, possibly born of close propinquity, or sometimes taking fire instantaneously at the first meeting. When born and nurtured of slower time, its development embraces a sense of peace, tranquility, repose, confidence, security, protection, permanence, spiritual solace as well as physical proximity, assurance of permanent welcome home, and understanding, physical, mental, cultural and traditional harmony and a tacit assurance of effort exerted toward and for the well-being of the beloved.

"Time, moreover, brings with it a powerful array of glamorous memories and tender associations. During a normal lifetime there are several stages of love: there is the love of Springtime youth, of mature middle age, and that ripe, mellow love of the elder years. Each stage in progress has its specific kind and quality of love, some element of which may be found in all three stages and other stages developing or becoming modified with time.

"With long years of slowly nurtured love comes adaptation and perfect adjustment; memories, dream-pictures, delicate, aesthetic stimuli and usual impressions of dream-beauty become permanent modifications through the influence of which each tacitly exercises upon the other. A familiar melody, a scene, an impression reaching down into the consciousness and memory of one or both when both live in the same mental and spiritual world; both harboring conceptions of life sufficiently similar to enable the two to share an existence in common, seeing the same thing when looking at the same object; each considering the life of the other as a natural and inevitable kind of life to live, so that it is not too abstract and visionary to have any significance for the tastes and temperaments and aspirations of the other.

"It is important that each knows *what* the other is. Is life to one a series of delicate, illusive and fantastic adventure-visions beckoning the spirit to untrodden paradises and unattainable feats of creative arts, while to the other, life is something quite material, to be tolerated somehow while immersed in the plodding effort of commonplace living, thinking, feeling, and doing? thus, brutelike debasing life, thought, sensibility and action instead of exalting and being exalted by them?

"Does the quality of affection as manifested by the one, bear sufficient kinship to the quality of affection en-

visaged by the other, to form an adequate basis for mutual sentimental life?

"One may think and love in dream-pictures of beauty and mystery; how nearly does such thinking and loving coincide with the normal thinking and loving as the other reckons such things? These, I believe, to be real points of love, and not such absurdly imaginative attraction as makes of love merely lust, and of the loved one an object of its expression and gratification.

"There are so many separate branches of thought, mood and feeling in which each must be able to summon up a very strong and genuine quota of affection. There is the purely aesthetic, the domestic, the whimsical, and humorous, the childish and diminutive, and even the historic and geographic. Each must try to understand the sphere of the other, and these spheres themselves must not be too antipodal in their values, motive-forces, perspectives, and modes of expression and fulfilment to evoke an adequate appreciation of their purport. Yet each must frankly recognize the essential fixed limitations of the other and serenely abide by them. Nor must there be extravagant theoretical ideals of perfection which are impossible in view of probable basic differences which cannot be eradicated.

"Very often ostentatious passion belonging to the exquisiteness of a few early years is erroneously regarded as love and is essentially incompatible with maturity.

"There is a universal difference between the romances of youth and of maturity. By forty or perhaps fifty a wholesome replacement process begins to operate, and love attains calm, cool depths based on tender association beside which the erotic infatuation of youth takes on a certain shade of cheapness and degradation. Mature tranquilized love produces an indyllic fidelity which is a testimonial to its sincerity, purity and intensity. At forty or fifty the more mental and deeply seated affection is a far more appropri-

ate subject for sentimental interest and rhetorical celebration than in the undisguised animalism of youth.

"Eros calls up visions of Springtime bowers and virginal delicacy. Hymen, of cheerful hearths, long shared dreams and little, familiar ways that time has made sweet and sacred; delicate ways and images of beauty and tenderness are built up through the many years of joint living and close companionship, creating an ineffable kindness and unflagging devotion such as hot and impetuous youth can never achieve.

"Youth brings with it certain erogenous and imaginative stimuli bound up in the tactile phenomena of slender, virginally-postured bodies and visual imagery of classical aesthetic contours symbolizing a kind of freshness and Springtime immaturity which is very beautiful but which has nothing to do with domestic love.

"No conservative man or woman expects such extraordinary physical exaltation except for a brief period in extreme youth; and any high grade person can soon transfer his or her psychic needs to other fields when middle age approaches; other forms of stimulation mean much more than sex-expression to such persons, so that they hardly give it more than a cursory thought. Mature men and women might regard youthful beauty as an exquisite statue or carving, to be admired but not necessarily desired, while more mature or elderly persons would be regarded simply like themselves, interesting or otherwise, to be liked and admired or conversely — according to their personalities and sociability.

"Love in extreme youth is more a matter of physiology, than psychology and wholly independent of the mature middle age. Since in most cases of youth, love has been imperfect or unsatisfactory, in later life there comes a wholesome craving for another chance to find true love which maturity alone seems capable of fashioning and keep-

ing unimpaired without expecting to thrill with the physical exaltation which is the rightful heritage of Springtime youth only."

By the standards of the 1970s, H. P. L. clearly wasn't with it!

† † †

THE JERSEY DEVIL

(Mullica River and Ocean County, N.J.)

Starving, the land poured past me;
glutted on sand, but needy
where the pine scrub suffered
its perpetual mange, it flooded
my windshield, whimpering
between December ribs.

It was an old night,
nearly the same as that about
one hundred years ago
that turned loss out to whet
its horns against the moon
when want whistled the silver
heartbreak of a locomotive
through the woods.

Now, as I drink the white stream
of the road, I glimpse parchment
tightened over bones, the horned
head and the hoofs, the empty sockets
of the eyes into which no macadam
roars, but where the leaves
flicker in pretense of life

from the shell of a ruined foundry,
 and the cry sears as the burning
 of a moon-scorched rail
 from under the soil beside the road
 through now to nowhere in New Jersey.

Devil or not, it is a tight
 hitch hardened where the ribs
 begin that grinds the stumps
 of molars at the meadow's edge.

— Barbara A. Holland

† † †

STRANGE FLOWERS BLOOM

Today strange flowers bloom
 Within my garden wall:
 A sheltered place where plants
 Grow slim and tall.

Today weird flowers bloom
 As red as blood and fair
 As flaming sunset's glow
 On raven hair.

The house seems empty now.
 She disappeared one night,
 And when I woke from dreams
 Of ghoulish fright

My hands were caked with soil.
 A bloody dagger there
 Beside our lover's couch . . .
 A strand of hair . . .

Today wild flowers bloom
 Within my garden wall;
 They are like eager lips
 Beyond recall.

— Duane Rimel
 † † †

THE SHADE IN THE OLD APPLE TREE

Nearly invisible in a background of leaves
 and basketwork sky, your vain ghost poses and poises
 on our filmed shoulders, barred in a celluloid stasis
 from the green thrust of time and all burgeoning loves,
 pressing yourself in our books seeking sacred groves
 among the living. At the shutter speed of crisis,
 you coil and coil among our shiny scales of voices,
 stilled now like fretted sky and lost leaves, my cry and Eve's.

The random lament is now rarer than our rages,
 conditioned to constant pressure of tandem pages
 and the sky's overwhelming burden on our backs.
 How tame you are who once were bitter bright and shining.
 The shame of it! to be caught by conjurer's tricks
 of light and shadow and a lost day's dappled twining.

— Walter H. Kerr

† † †

A PRESENTATION TO GEORGE

by Miki Myrick

The moment I saw the sword in that little country
 antique shop, I knew it was for him. How George would
 love to fancy himself a knight of old. But . . . not just any

knight. Not George. He would be a descendant of royalty bearing a sword befitting his lofty station in life — a sword resembling this one, with enormous jewels encrusted in its filigree handle. All would be duly impressed, of course, assuming the jewels to be rare, priceless, the sword painstakingly fashioned by the finest craftsmen in the world. George would be such a knight.

The shopkeeper finished wrapping this symbol of pretentious aristocracy, and I nodded as he assured me that I had stumbled upon a rare find. "I have two now . . . George and this," I thought giddily, handing him my check for fifty dollars. The price was high; but, then, unique finds are always costly. Nobody knew this better than I.

I carried the package to the car, carefully placed it in the trunk behind the spare tire. It was to be a surprise for George, a presentation made at the appropriate time. He liked things done tastefully.

All during the long drive home I munched antacids and tightly gripped the steering wheel, willing my body's control as my mind dwelled on George. George and my interminable imprisonment with him in his airtight cage of values that gave him such pleasure . . . and gave me an ulcer.

When I arrived home, George was waiting for me. "Where have you been, Martha?" George demanded.

I cancelled out 'shopping', the obvious answer. For his benefit I carefully worded, "I have been giving lengthy consideration to an acquisition to present to you."

"Good Lord, Martha!" he said. "I do so hope that you haven't purchased an ordinary piece of merchandise. I have expended unlimited energy to improve your taste that we might achieve the decorator touch in our home."

"This will give just the right touch," I assured him as I went into the kitchen to start dinner. Or, as George

would have said, "To prepare our repast." The dining room table had to be set formally, although it was an annoyance to me. George wouldn't even consider eating in the kitchen. George had to dine. He never did come home to relax the way other husbands did. Instead of removing his tie, he'd straighten it. He had to be at his best at all times just in case someone came by. Of course, no one ever did.

Leaving me to clean up after dinner, George perched on his favorite chair, an ornately carved, hideous gold velvet. He had so arranged the room that sitting there smoking his Meerschaum, he could contemplate his reflection in the gilt mirror. Watching him admire his debonair image, my stomach lurched. The time had come.

For George's sake I would have to carefully complete the scene. I put on Beethoven's Ninth, knowing that he would feel both cultured and pleased with my thoughtfulness. Then I took two antacid pills, and went upstairs to ready myself for the presentation.

In truth, it hadn't been OUR bedroom for over ten years. However, no one would have known by looking that I slept on the living room davenport, because the drapes were always kept drawn and the doors locked until all signs of our real life were methodically put away. George embellished the illusion of our blissful togetherness by insisting on extra little touches like a carefully selected book on each night table. For my side he had chosen the love poems of Elizabeth Barrett Browning. My clothing, of course, remained in the bedroom closet so that even the most determined guest would remain unsuspecting.

As I squeezed into the gold brocade hostess gown that was George's favorite, I smiled, knowing how happy he would be to see me. I was now appropriately adorned for the wife of a royal knight . . . no matter if I had to munch antacids while making my descent.

George took time out from his orchestral conducting

to comment gravely, "Martha, you are attractively and suitably adorned for a festive occasion." Then, hopefully, "Are we expecting guests?"

"No, George, not just now," I answered. "But this is a very special occasion. I have a presentation for you. I want you to continue sitting there, just as you are, expectantly, with your eyes closed."

He did, and I do feel that the gift was quite fittingly received. I regret only that he couldn't have seen the intricately carved handle . . . the jewels shining in the reflection of the Tiffany lamp. George was always so appreciative of the most minute detail.

With that in mind, I straightened his tie before placing my call. "Hello, this is Mrs. Daniels . . . Mrs. George Daniels. We're over on the better part of town. Our home is the one with the unmistakable French Colonial elegance . . . on Dumart Street . . . number two, four, six. Now be certain that you wipe your feet before you enter. You are being extended a cordial invitation on behalf of George. I have just presented him with an extraordinary gift which he is dying to show you. Yes, I shall be present to greet you, Officer."

† † †

NECROLOGY. Late last May "R.T." or R. Taylor" — Richard Lippincott Denison Taylor — internationally known as an artist and cartoonist, died at his home in West Redding, Connecticut. A contributor to *The New Yorker*, *Playboy*, and other magazines — the author of two cartoon collections — *The Better Taylors* and *The Wrong Bag* — the illustrator of such books as *Fractured French*, *Butchers Baseball*, *Lots of Limericks*, *By the Dawn's Ugly Light*, etc., — the author of a textbook, *An Introduction to Cartooning* — R. Taylor was perhaps most intimately known to patrons of Arkham House as the jacket artist for such books as *Dreams and Fancies*, *The Shuttered Room* and

Other Pieces, *The Mask of Cthulhu*, *The Trail of Cthulhu*, and *The Horror from the Hills*. Perhaps of even more significance to Arkham House, it was Mr. Taylor who was responsible for the basic design of Arkham House books. Among his papers, Mr. Taylor left a completed letterhead design for August Derleth — not the August Derleth of the *Sac Prairie Saga*, but the August Derleth of Arkham House.



† † †

ASSOCIATIONAL. From time to time readers make application to us to inquire about any kind of society devoted to H. P. Lovecraft. Until now, there has been none, but now George H. Record (Box 183 / Grand Canyon, Arizona 86023) has begun *The Lovecraftians*. Prospective members should apply to him. He contemplates eventual publication of *The Lovecraft Review*, if there is enough interest and if the membership warrants.

Opinions pro and con about the film version of *The Dunwich Horror* continue to reach Arkham House. In our opinion, however, the last word has been said by Vincent Canby under title of "Those Dreadful Doings at Dunwich" in *The New York Times*. Lovecraft would be astounded to find any work of his in any medium commanding the equivalent of two columns in the *Times*. Mr. Canby prefaces his review with some paragraphs about Lovecraft and the Cthulhu Mythos, indicating more than a passing interest

and a better background for his review than most reviewers can claim.

John Gawsworth — called “poet and ex-King of Redonda”, a title he inherited from the late M. P. Shiel, is dead. He died last September in a London hospital, “virtually unknown and penniless,” according to London papers; he was only 58. His own name, as apart from his pen-name by which he was the more widely known, was Terence Ian Fytton Armstrong. In his time he had been editor of *Poetry Review*, founder-editor of *The English Digest*, and London editor of *The Literary Digest*. Presumably, with his death, the “kingdom” (plus the associated “dukes”) of Redonda — a small land area in the Leeward Islands — will lapse.

Roy A. Squires (1745 Kenneth Road, Glendale, California 91201) has published *The Fugitive Poems*, by Clark Ashton Smith, in the usual handsome format that has distinguished his publications. The set of four — *The Tartarus of the Suns*, *The Palace of Jewels*, *In the Ultimate Valleys*, and *To George Sterling* — sells at \$20.00. Individual titles are \$5.00 each.

The Summer 1970 issue of *The Sherlock Holmes Journal* carries Roger Johnson's *Trifling Monograph Concerning Mr. Solar Pons*. “The Englishness of Solar Pons is indisputable to those who know him,” writes the author, who is head of the Scion London branch of the Praed Street Irregulars. “It must remain a matter of mystery and admiration that the finest complete body of Holmesian pastiche should be chronicled by so American an author as August Derleth.”

As most of our readers must know by now, Ballantine Books has been publishing an admirable series of Adult Fantasy books, under the general editorship of Lin Carter, whose *Dreams from R'lyeh* we expect to publish in the near future. These books sell at \$.95 the copy; titles so far published include the following — *The Wood Beyond the*

World, by William Morris / *Zothique and Hyperborea*, by Clark Ashton Smith / *The Silver Stallion, Figures of Earth*, and *The High Place*, by James Branch Cabell / *Lilith and Phantastes*, by George MacDonald / *The Sorcerer's Ship*, by Hannes Bok / *Land of Unreason*, by Fletcher Pratt and L. Sprague de Camp / *At the Edge of the World*, by Lord Dunsany / *Lud-in-the Mist*, by Hope Mirrilees / *The Island of the Mighty*, by Evangeline Walton / *The Shaving of Shagpat*, by George Meredith / *The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath*, by H. P. Lovecraft / *The Well at the World's End*, in two volumes, by William Morris / *Deryni Rising*, by Katherine Kurtz / *Golden Cities, Far*, an anthology edited by Lin Carter, and *Beyond the Golden Stair*, by Hannes Bok. In addition, Ballantine are bringing out a reprint of *The Survivor and Others*, by H. P. Lovecraft and August Derleth, and *Fungi From Yuggoth and Other Poems*, by H. P. Lovecraft.

Under the Ballantine imprint of "Beagle Books" a series of Lovecraft titles will appear soon. These include — tentatively titled — *The Lurker at the Threshold*, *At the Mountains of Madness*, *The Tomb and Other Stories*, *The Lurking Fear and Other Stories*, *Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos*, *The Shadow Over Innsmouth and other Stories* — half a dozen in all. Furthermore, August Derleth's *The Mask of Cthulhu* and *The Trail of Cthulhu* may follow in paperback, making an almost complete set of Lovecraft and Cthulhu work in paperback.

During the month of October, midwestern papers gave a goodly amount of space to August Derleth — who is Arkham House, as the patrons know. The occasion was the sponsoring of an "August Derleth Recognition Day" by the local Chamber of Commerce, who, said its President naively at the banquet that concluded the day, was being honored for the publicity "Augie" had brought to the

area through his serious work in the Sac Prairie Saga, and to Wisconsin generally in all his books. Over 400 people attended the banquet, some flying in from as far as California and Florida, proving — as Editor Miles McMillin of Madison's *Capital Times*, put it, "that Sauk Prairie is an exception to the rule that a prophet is not without honor save in his own home." Further with McMillin: "'Augie' enjoyed the evening in the hearty way he does everything. He greeted Elsie and me with the quip that these things usually happen only after death and added that he has been carefully reading the obit notices — just to make sure. It was difficult to tell whether his children — the lovely April and the ebullient Walden — enjoyed the occasion more than did their father. There were speeches — all very short at the insistence of the guest of honor — readings from his books and poems, and some brief reminiscing and commentary from 'Augie'. A special treat of the evening was the circulation of some delightful Derleth caricatures by Frank Utpatel, whose illustrations have graced the author's books through the years. And there was a new book to mark it all — *Return to Walden West* — the author's latest. He was kept busy autographing, as usual.

"The place teemed with people whose names are associated with Wisconsin — those who write about it and are written about. Mel Ellis, whose sensitive reporting of Wisconsin's outdoors has been favorite reading fare in my family for years, was there with his pretty wife. Edna Meudt, the Dodgeville farmwoman-poet who was honored by Governor Knowles over the weekend for her literary contributions and who was the subject of a profile piece in Saturday's *Capital Times Green*, sat at the head table. So did Edgar Kezeli, President of the Wisconsin Regional Writers Association. And Prof. Robert Gard, the creator of the Wisconsin Idea Theatre and the author of numerous books on Wisconsin, was master of ceremonies. Ray Sives-

ind brought greetings from the Wisconsin Historical Society. . . .

"Prof. Gard wondered if the University of Wisconsin would wait as long as it did with Frank Lloyd Wright before recognizing Derleth's contributions with the award of an honorary degree. School Supt. Gerald Eyler announced that the library and resource center of the Sauk Prairie Middle School would be named after the famed author. . . ." President Paul Meyer of the Chamber read from the *Publishers' Weekly's* advance review of *Return to Walden West* — as "a lovely, compassionate, deeply-felt book of reminiscences worthy of a place alongside Derleth's best and such standards as *Winesburg, Ohio*."

† † †

Arkham House is once again caught in a cost/space spiral — rapidly increasing costs, and at the same time decreasing space — which means that some alterations in the announced publishing schedule printed in the newest stock-list must be anticipated. Lovecraft's Selected Letters III, now being finally proofed in manuscript by Donald Wandrei, seems firm for April or thereabouts; so does Dark Things, edited by August Derleth; and, too, Smith's Selected Poems, both for Summer 1971. Books by Brian Lumley, Ramsey Campbell, August Derleth, Frank Belknap Long, and Donald Fryer will be brought out as soon as possible.

† † †

The Arkham Collector will round out Volume One by publishing No. 9 in April, and No. 10 in July or August . . . It should be noted too that within two months, The Dark Brotherhood and Other Pieces, by H. P. Lovecraft & Divers Hands, will be out of print. In three months more, Nine Horrors and a Dream, by Joseph Payne Brennan, and The Reminiscences of Solar Pons, by August Derleth, will also be out of print.

† † †